

Report to: **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
Date: **14 January 2020**
Title: **Member 2019 Induction Review**
Portfolio Area: **Council – Cllr Neil Jory**
Wards Affected: **All**
Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken: **Immediately**

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RECOMMENDATION

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the initial views of the Member Development Steering Group on the 2019 Member Induction Programme (as outlined at Section 3 below) and is given the opportunity to make formal representations on the Programme for the Steering Group to consider at its next meeting.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 Following the Borough Council Elections in May 2019, an Induction Programme for all elected Members of the Council was delivered. A copy of the Programme is attached at Appendix 1;
- 1.2 To review the effectiveness of the Programme, a short survey was circulated to all Members for completion and a total of 14 responses were received. A summary of these findings was considered by the Member Development Steering Group at its meeting on 7 January 2020 and is also attached at Appendix 2.
- 1.3 This report presents the initial views of the Steering Group on the review into the 2019 Induction Programme.

2. Background

- 2.1 The 2019 Member Induction Programme had been designed by the Member Development Steering Group in response to some constructive feedback to the May 2015 equivalent Programme.
- 2.2 Following further consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny (Internal) Committee, the Programme was ultimately approved by the Hub Committee at its meeting on 1 November 2016 (Minute HC 31 refers) (subject to delegated authority being granted to the Senior Specialist – Democratic Services, in consultation with the Steering Group and Group Leaders, to make any necessary minor amendments);
- 2.3 The Programme was designed to act as both a refresher for re-elected Members and to inform newly elected Members about the operations of the Council and the role and responsibilities of Borough Councillors;
- 2.4 The Programme ran for approximately three months and aimed to help new (and returning) Members to settle into their roles as quickly and as effectively as possible.

3. Steering Group Views

- 3.1 In focusing on the results of the Member Feedback on the 2019 Induction Survey, the Group reached the following conclusions at its meeting on 7 January 2020:
 - 14 Member responses to the Survey was considered to be somewhat disappointing;
 - Overall, the Induction Programme had been well received;
 - The constraints of striking what was a delicate balance between providing newly elected Members with sufficient information to 'hit the ground running' without overly burdening them with too much information too quickly was recognised. The Group also recognises that this balance would be different for each Member and was further constrained by the Council employing a shared workforce with South Hams District Council;
 - Future suggestions for improvements to the Programme included:
 - o Returning Members taking on an increased leadership role in the delivery of the Programme (NB. the Steering Group did acknowledge that this had been the intention for May 2019. However, the turnover of longstanding Senior Members at the May 2019 Elections had been unprecedented and had made it very difficult to deliver on this intention);
 - o Consideration being given to whether or not some sessions should be exclusively for newly elected Members. In noting the comments in the feedback that some sessions had been over dominated by returning Members, the Steering Group felt that this point required further consideration. As a result, the Group has requested that comparative analysis of the

- feedback between newly elected and returning Members be presented to its next meeting on 18 February 2020;
- In light of the number of comments about the delivery styles of presenting officers, the Group welcomed the intention to arrange an internal 'train the trainer' session for relevant Council officers;
 - The Group believe that, in order to consider the dynamic of the Council membership (including individual strengths and weaknesses), it would be useful to arrange a future all Member session around the power of soft skills (e.g. to include the identification of different personality types and developing a 'team'). If such a session was well received, it was felt that this could be built into future Induction Programmes;
 - The subtle differences between 'presentation' and 'training' sessions and the need to identify for each session whether they were 'presentation' based or 'training' based. Having been asked by the Council (at its meeting on 17 December 2019) for a view on Member sessions that could potentially be delivered over Skype, the Group also gave a firm steer that it would be suitable for 'presentation' based sessions to be delivered by this means but not for 'training' based sessions.
- There was an overriding wish amongst the Steering Group to undertake a more detailed analysis of the Survey findings and this will be undertaken at its next meeting to be held on 18 February 2020. In the meantime, the Group was also mindful that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be given the opportunity to make formal representations on the Induction Programme and these would then be considered at the meeting on 18 February 2020.

4. Member Learning and Development Plan

- 4.1 There is a recognition that Member Learning and Development should not just stop after the initial Induction Programme following an election;
- 4.2 The Steering Group also recognise that, in the demanding and fast changing environment of local government, Members more than ever before have a responsibility to make sure that they have access to the ongoing Learning and Development opportunities that they need to serve their constituents.
- 4.3 As a result, the Steering Group is tasked with being responsible for the development (and ongoing review) of the Council's Member Learning and Development Plan.
- 4.4 All Members are encouraged to engage in this process and provide their thoughts on all aspects of Member Learning and Development (including future training needs) to the Senior Specialist – Democratic Services.

5. Options available and consideration of risk

5.1 The key risks arising from this report relate to the failure to provide adequate training, development and/or support to Members. The result of this key risk not being properly addressed could lead to a reduction in the effectiveness of Members in their role and ultimately the democratic decision-making process. This would inevitably harm the Council’s relationships with its communities and the reputation of both the Council and individual Members.

6. Proposed Way Forward

6.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the initial views of the Member Development Steering Group on the 2019 Member Induction Programme and is given the opportunity to make formal representations on the Programme for the Steering Group to consider at its next meeting.

7. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	The Council Constitution makes frequent reference to the importance of Member training. For example, a Member must have received appropriate planning and licensing related training before they can serve on the Development Management and Licensing Committee.
Financial implications to include reference to value for money	Y	Whilst it is anticipated that most Member Learning and Development sessions will be conducted in-house, there is a Member Training budget of £5,000 per annum.
Risk	Y	The risk implications are identified in Section 5 of the report.
Supporting Corporate Strategy	Y	Council Theme – <i>Efficient and effective</i>
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity	N	N/A
Safeguarding	N	N/A
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder	N	N/A
Health, Safety and Wellbeing	N	N/A

Other implications	N	None
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Appendices:

1 – Summary of the 2019 Induction Survey findings (*NB. the appendices that are referred to in this Summary are available upon Member request*).

Background Documents:

Council Constitution;
Member Induction Survey;
Member Development Steering Group Terms of Reference; and
Copies of the Member Development Steering Group agenda arising from the meeting held on 7 January 2020.